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Of both the

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THEIR

Number and Stations.

With a perfect

NARRATIVE

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That have passed between them hitherto:

In a

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From Aboard the EDGAR.

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A LETTER FROM THE FLEET.

Honoured Sir,

I Am obliged somewhat by *promise*, but more by *Friendship*, to give you an accompt both of *my own*, and the *Fleets condition*: But the *former* has so necessary a *dependance* upon the *latter*, that to tel you 'tis well with me, when 'tis so with the *Fleet*, would be as much a *Tautology*, as the *contrary* wou'd be a *falshood*. Sir, you know I have ever lived plentifully and chearfully, blest be the company of such friends, (and amongst them particularly your self) as have even set *bounds* to my *wishes* of any *Happiness*, beyond what I enjoy'd: But really, now I find a pleasure in my life, so much beyond whatsoever I could have hop'd for in it; that I should even grow a Coward for fear of losing it, but that the very hazard proves the greatest part of that pleasure, I else might fear the being dispossest of. Sir, to be in the midst of the gallantest *Fleet* that I'm sure, ever eyes beheld, to be, under the Conduct of a Prince, skilful to a Miracle, and Valiant, to Terrour: To Engage in the behalf of the best of Kings, against the worst of States: How great is the encouragement! ..... Dear Sir, pardon me. Loyalty guides my hand to write more than I designed, though less than I think: Your own breast supplies you with such suggestions, as would render what I can say more impertinent: And therefore to pursue my design a little nearer, I must come to particulars, and give you an accompt of what happned since our being off at Sea, and of these occurrences your *Gazetts* furnish you with so true and speedy intelligence, that I suppose my relation will, by that time it has the happiness of a sight your hands, lose the Name of News: and (like Cider carried by Sea) decay in it's spirit and become insipid. However it is one part of the Service that I owe you to endeavour to serve you.

The last intelligence you had from my Cousin ..... as I remember, gave you a full accompt of all transactions, till the third instant, at which time our *Fleet* was about half a League from the middle ground: the Wind was (I can hardly say it blew) (*North-eastwardly*, but it prov'd so very scant, that we were forc'd to come to an *Anker*: And about three in the afternoon we saw the *Dutch Fleet*, in all, about Threescore and Six or Seven Sail, first at an *Anchor*, but about Six a Clock they weigh'd, and stood *South-wardly*, making way (as near as we conjecture) towards the *Long-sands*.

On the morrow we found them lying at *Anchor*, between *Orfordness*, and *Hosley-Bay*, having divided themselves into two Squadrons. We all flatter'd our selves with the hopes of making up to them, and coming speedily to an Engagement; but they took all imaginable care to stand off, and keep the Weather-gage, continually shifting their Station by night, insomuch that they never were at any certainty.

On

On the fifth inſtant we got to our Main-tops, but the Weather being ſomewhat Hazy, we could not ken them; inſomuch that his Highneſs Prince *Rupert*, thought fit to ſend forth Scouts every way, to try if he could diſcover them, one of which in a ſhort time returned with this advice, that the Enemy was Anchor'd in the Gun-Fleet, whereupon the Prince immediately commanded us to Weigh, hoping if poſſible to reach them that night, or however, early the next morning, but the poor ſhifters ſmelt the danger, and inſtantly got them packing in a lamentable hurry and ſtood *Eaſt-ward*, with all the ſail they could make; leaving behind them a ſmall Dogger, which ſome of the ſcouts took, and brought back to our Fleet. You could not have contain'd your ſelf from Laughter, to have ſeen what a ſcornful anger our Seamen expreſs'd when they found themſelves fruſtrated in their hopes of an Engagement; One with threats, Another with ſcorn, a third with revilings (ſuch as were true enough) ſufficiently expreſſing their own Valour, and the enemies Cowardize, and Fear; which (a very ingenious Gentleman) obſerving; Fellow ſouldiers (ſays he in a ſmile) would you not have the Boors, run for ſhelter, when they ſmell a Storm in the Wind?

On the *Seventh* Inſtant, we met with a ſmall *Oſtender*, who told us that he the day before had paſſed through the whole Dutch Fleet, and that he believ'd they had (ſmall and great) Seventy two or three Sail; that he then left them Anchoring on the Coaſt of *Zealand*, at a Place call'd *Scone-Velt*. He ſaid that they had not (at moſt) above forty five men of War; adding that he was call'd aboard their Admiral, who had but five hundred and fifty men aboard her, and yet they confeſſed her to be the beſt man'd Frigot they had. He aſſured us moreover that he was confident they would never engage us, if they could poſſibly avoid it; for that their men expreſſed nothing but fear, nor their ſhips, but Weakneſs. And now ſince they were got ſo far out of the way, his Highneſs thought convenient to joyn as ſoon as poſſible with the *French*, of which he was pleaſed to advertize *Count d'Eſtrdes*, Vice Admiral of *France*, that ſo he might meet him in the *Downs*, where his Highneſs intends the General Rendezvows, in order whereto we made all the ſail we could and ſtood for *Dover*, of which we came in ſight a Friday Morning early, the Wind blowing freſh & very fair, inſomuch that we are in hopes of making the *Downs* this evening, where you may expect we ſhall ſuddainly joyn with the *French* Fleet.

And now Sir, I am to beg your pardon, that I have been ſo tedious in repeating, (for ought I know) ſtale News. This I aſſure you is the trueſt accompt I can give you of both the Fleets, and though it be an *Unpoliſh'd* one, yet (like a *Rough Diamond*) it may deſerve ſome value to be put on it, becauſe of it's *Truth*: I forbear to make any farther Apology, ſince what I have written is in order to your Commands, though poſſibly not in anſwear to your Expectation. Should there be any Engagement, there will lye one upon me (if I live) to give you the firſt accompt of it I can, and the trueſt, both which are debts incumbent upon my Zeal, and Integrity, to manifeſt my ſelf.

20 IV 69

SIR,

Your Faithful Kinſman, and moſt Humble Servant, T. H.

May 11th. 1673.

FINIS.